

## THE WISCONSIN PHALANX AT CERESCO

BY S. M. PEDRICK.

## I. Introductory

The Wisconsin phalanx has been described in many articles, and the following is merely a collection of what has been recorded concerning the objects and results of that company of persons, comprising the earliest residents of what is now the city of Ripon, who under the name of the Wisconsin phalanx, first occupied the peaceful valley of Ceresco.

The formal records of the organization, so far as the same have been preserved, were presented to the Ripon Historical Society by Robert D. Mason, the last president of the phalanx, prior to his death in 1901. These records include the following: record book of transfers of stock; record of deeds, duplicates, transfers, and mortgages; record of names, place of birth, date of residence, births, and deaths; treasurer's accounts, 1848 to 1852; stock ledger; ledger accounts; secretary's record from March 23, 1844, to November 29, 1847; sundry old receipts, old deeds, assignments of stock, etc.

## II. Preliminaries

The theories of Charles Fourier, the French socialist, for the re-organization of society became very popular in the United States during the early forties of the last century. As Warren Chase says: "Its vast economies, its equitable distributions, its harmony of groups and series, its attractive industry, its advantages for schools, meetings, parties and social festivities, all seemed to make his theory invulnerable to attack."<sup>1</sup> The New

<sup>1</sup> *Life-line of the Lone One* (Boston, 1858).

York *Tribune* and other papers of repute became advocates of the so-called "science of new relations," and Fourier's principles of association became very popular. In all parts of the country, associations sprang into existence in response to the interest in these theories. The appeals that were made in the columns of the *Tribune* though lofty and inspiring, were imaginative and impracticable in the extreme, but, nevertheless, they stirred thousands. The following is fairly representative of the articles that appeared day after day from the enthusiastic pen of Albert Brisbane, with the sanction and hearty endorsement of the great editor, Horace Greeley:<sup>2</sup>

Before answering the question, How can association be practically realized, we will remark that we will not propose any sudden transformation of the present system of society, but only a regular and gradual substitution of the new order by local changes and replacement. One Association must be started, and others will follow, without overthrowing any true institutions in state or church, such as universal suffrage or religious worship.

If a few rich could be interested in the subject, or a stock company could be formed among them with a capital stock of four or five hundred thousand dollars, which would be sufficient, their money would be safe; for the land, edifices, flocks, etc., of the Association, would be mortgaged to secure it. The sum which is required to build a small railroad, a steamship, to start an insurance company, would establish an Association. Could not such a sum be raised? \* \* \* \*

The truth of association could also be proven by children. A little Association or an industrial or agricultural institution might be established with four hundred children from the ages of five to fifteen. Various lighter branches of agricultural and mechanical arts, with little tools and implements adapted to different ages, which are the delight of children, could be prosecuted. The useful occupations could, if organized according to a system which we shall later explain, be rendered more pleasing and attractive than are their plays at present. Such an Association would prove the possibility of attractive industry and that children could support themselves by their own labor, and obtain at the same time a superior industrial and scientific education.

In the year 1843, the citizens of Southport, (now Kenosha), in Racine county, Wisconsin, became interested in these burning questions of the hour, and the Franklyn lyceum of the little

<sup>2</sup>New York *Tribune*, March, 1842.

village took up the subject of association on Fourier's plan.<sup>1</sup> November 21, 1843, the question was debated for the first time in the Lyceum, "Does the system of Fourier present a practicable plan for such a re-organization of society as will guard against our present social evils?" December 5th following, another discussion was had, on the question: "Are mankind so naturally depraved, and is society composed of such discordant material, as to render the adoption of Fourier's plan impracticable?" December 12th the subject came up again, in this form: "Would the system of Fourier if adopted tend to diminish the evils of Society?"

One of the men most interested in these discussions was Warren Chase. He ardently embraced the new theories and when taunted with the argument, why not practice this, if you believe it the best way to live, he decided to try it.<sup>2</sup> Chase was at this time about thirty years of age, of versatile talent, indomitable energy, and untiring perseverance, and he threw himself into the association movement, wielding a ready pen in its behalf for some years. He undoubtedly was the leader in the association experiment that resulted from the discussions in the lyceum.

The following is a brief synopsis of his biography: Born in Pittsfield, N. H., January 5, 1813, he emigrated to Michigan in 1833, where he married Mary T. White, of Newport, N. H. In 1838 he removed to Southport, and on the formation of the association, to Ceresco, where he remained nine years, holding several local offices. He was a member of both Wisconsin Constitutional Conventions, of the first state senate, and was Free-soil candidate for governor in 1850. After leaving Wisconsin, he first returned to Michigan, then to St. Louis, where in 1872 he was a presidential elector, and in 1876 removed to California, where he held a number of political offices. He died February 25, 1891.

As a result of the debates and of Chase's efforts, preliminary meetings were held at the old temperance hall, and a constitution was drafted for an association to be known as the Wisconsin

<sup>1</sup> Butterfield, *History of Fond du Lac county*, (Chicago, 1880) pp. 400-408.

<sup>2</sup> *Life-line of the Lone One*.

Phalanx. March 23, 1844, a meeting of the subscribers to the constitution was held at the village school house, at which meeting William Starr was the secretary, and Michael Meyers, chairman. Officers were elected pursuant to the constitution, and the venture was now well started. At this meeting a committee was appointed to co-operate with the agent previously appointed to explore various sections of the territory, in order to report such location as they deemed eligible for a domain. This agent was Ebenezer Childs whose advice was largely followed in the ultimate selection of a location, or domain, as it was called, for the operations of the phalanx. This committee, after several resignations, was finally composed of the following gentlemen: E. C. Southworth, Canfield Marsh, and Orrin R. Stevens.

While Childs and the committee were absent on their tour of investigation, the phalanx was busy completing the work of organization; 500 copies of the constitution and by-laws were printed for distribution; W. W. Wheeler, Peter Johnson, and Warren Chase were selected as the three trustees of the phalanx, to hold for the use of the society the title to all property of the association, real and personal; members were added, so that by May 25, 1844, the total membership was seventy-one; Southworth, Wheeler, and Chase were appointed to provide for raising funds with which to purchase the domain, and as a special inducement for the payment of money into the treasury, a premium of twenty per cent, payable in stock, was offered for all cash payments made before the first of May; the treasurer's bond, in the sum of \$10,000, was approved, and subscriptions were taken for stock in the new company. Most of the stock was paid for by the transfer to the trustees of personal property, at a valuation fixed by the board of directors; but quite a number took advantage of the offer of a premium for cash payments. May 8, the treasurer, E. C. Southworth, reported \$1,026.24 in the treasury, besides about \$60 in the secretary's hands.

The committee on the proposed location made its report May 8, 1844, at a meeting of the stockholders, at which the treasurer was instructed to enter one and one-quarter sections of land<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This land was located as follows: NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ -21-16-14, NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ -20-16-14,

selected for the domain. For this he was to take the title in his own name, and thereafter deed the same to the trustees for the association. Full authority was conferred upon him to enter more land if he should have more money prior to making the entry. Mr. Chase did not approve of the direction to enter the land in the treasurer's name, and he contrived to have the money sent to Green Bay by a merchant of that place, and when the duplicate receipts were returned for the land that had been entered, they ran in the name of Michael Frank, whom Mr. Chase describes as "a quiet citizen of the village, of irreproachable character and far too honorable to defraud anyone, and one in whom everyone had confidence who knew him."<sup>1</sup> An examination of the land record corroborates Mr. Chase's statement, as the duplicate receipts from the land office are dated Sept. 6, 1844, and one and one-eighth sections of land in section 20, 21, and 29 are entered in Mr. Frank's name, although three-eighths of a section are entered on the same date by Jacob Beckwith. None was entered in the treasurer's name. That Mr. Chase was justified in his arbitrary assumption of authority seems to be borne out by the fact that the records, under date of October 29, 1844, request the secretary to write to the sureties of the treasurer's bond "notifying them that E. C. Southworth refuses or neglects to settle with the Wisconsin phalanx as treasurer, and that they will be called upon as his surety."

The domain having been selected, it now remained to complete the preparations for going forward to the promised land. A committee was named to designate the property that should be carried onto the domain and the persons who should constitute the first party; directions were given to procure a tent to be used until other shelter could be provided; arrangements were made to keep an account, showing the cost of board for the first two months; a committee was given the duty of providing food for the party en route to the domain; and last but not least, a resolution was passed fixing the price for washing clothes on the domain at two shillings per dozen.

W  $\frac{1}{2}$  SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  and E  $\frac{1}{2}$  SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ -20-16-14, NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ -29-16-14, E  $\frac{1}{2}$  NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ -29-16-14 and S  $\frac{1}{2}$  SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ -17-16-14.

<sup>1</sup>*Life-line of the Lone One.*

### III. Constitution

The Constitution was prefaced by a preamble, reciting that the subscribers adopted it "in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, promote our common welfare, and secure the blessings of social happiness to ourselves and our posterity."

The object was "the prosecution of agriculture, manufactures, commerce, the arts and sciences, education and domestic industry, according to the system of Charles Fourier as near as may be practicable."

The property was represented by stock, divided into shares of the value of twenty-five dollars each, and provision was made for paying for the same in cash, or in property at its cash value as fixed by the board of directors.

The affairs of the Association were managed by a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, together with a board of directors consisting of nine members—all to constitute a board of managers. The officers had the usual powers, and could be removed from office by the board for neglect of duty, absence, or incompetence. Three trustees were provided for, who should take title to the property, as the association had no legal existence at this time. It was contemplated that whenever there should be forty families resident on the domain, a new form of government was to go into operation, to be administered by councils, according to such plan as should be then agreeable to the resident members.

A person could be either a stockholder, or a member, or both, as his case might require. No person could be admitted to membership except on application to the board, and the board could impose such conditions as it deemed wise. A resident member was permitted to withdraw from the association upon giving two weeks' notice of his intention, and upon leaving, the member was entitled to his proportionate share of the profits up to that time.

There were to be two meetings of the stockholders each year, and provision was made for fully informing every member not only of the meeting but also of the condition of the affairs of the association. Every stockholder was given at such meetings

one vote for the first share, and on financial questions one vote for each five shares thereafter, not exceeding ten votes in all; but on other questions no stockholder had more than one vote in any case. As both men and women were permitted to hold stock, this provision seems to have given the right of suffrage to residents on the domain to both sexes alike.

Before the December meeting in each year the cash value of the real estate, exclusive of improvements, was to be estimated, and any increase in the valuation since the previous valuation was considered the property of the stockholders and was to be divided among them in proportion to the stock that had been paid in. The total product for the year was to be ascertained at the same time and a general settlement with each member was to be made at this meeting. After deducting taxes, repairs, and insurance, the total product was to be divided as follows: one quarter was to be paid as a dividend to the holders of stock, and three quarters to be divided among those who performed the labor. At the time of subscribing for stock, any person was permitted to elect whether he would take a fixed dividend of seven per cent or would take his share of the actual dividend; and the payment of this seven per cent was made a charge on the three quarters belonging to labor, the excess which the stock earned above seven per cent being given to labor.

The board of directors and officers were forbidden to contract any obligation except by unanimous consent of all the stockholders.

Sec. 1, Art. 7, provided that "There shall be a toleration of religious opinion and action and every member of the association shall be protected in his religious belief to worship God according to the dictates of conscience and reason; but no person shall ever be taxed without his consent for the support of any minister of the Gospel or teacher of religion."

#### IV. By-Laws

Some features of the by-laws that were framed pursuant to this constitution should be mentioned, as throwing light on the principles and ideals of the association.

It was provided that goods, merchandise, board, or other

necessaries were to be furnished to members at a cost value; that rent should never exceed ten per cent of the value of the building occupied; and that any member was to have the privilege of having his own horse and carriage on the domain by paying to the association the actual cost of keeping.

The board of directors was made the judge of the kinds of work and business that the association should pursue, and no appeal was provided for, in case of dissatisfaction on this account. The shares of stock were held accountable for any sums that might be due from a stockholder to the association, and no dividends on stock were to be made except on the balance of the stock held free from such debt or incumbrance. Whenever five or more persons were at work in one branch of industry, they were to organize a group, and choose a foreman. It was his duty to keep an account of the labor performed by each member of the group "and adjudge the rank according to skill and productiveness such person may exercise," and make his report to the secretary once a week. If any person was dissatisfied with the decision of his foreman, he might appeal from the foreman to the members of his group, and the decision of the group was final. All the groups engaged in the same branch of industry were to form themselves into a series, and elect a superintendent of the series. This superintendent was given power to determine the relative rank of each group in productiveness, subject to the advice of the whole series. When the association grew to be large enough, so that there were several series, each with its superintendent, it was contemplated that these superintendents would constitute a council of industry, which should supercede the board of directors. This council was directed, when it should be organized, to divide the different industrial classes into three ranks to be designated as follows: 1st, class of necessity; 2d, class of usefulness; and 3d, class of attractiveness. These classes were to have such relative rank in the distribution of the profits of labor, as the council might decide.

"All unnecessary business and all sporting of the association shall be suspended on the first day of the week." "Any member of the association may be expelled therefrom by a majority of the resident members for the following causes, viz: rude



and indecent behavior, drunkenness, trafficking in intoxicating drinks, licentiousness, profane swearing, lying, stealing or defrauding another, protracted idleness, or willfully injuring the property of the association, knowingly consenting to the injury of the association or any individual member thereof, gambling, habitually indulging in censoriousness and faultfinding; provided, however, that no member of the association shall be expelled without first being notified," and an opportunity given to be heard in his own defense. Provision was made for the trial of such cases. All disagreements were to be settled by arbitration, each party choosing one arbitrator, and the two a third, and an appeal was permitted from the decision of the arbitrators to the directors or the council, "whose decision shall be final."

The association was required to provide the means of education for all the children of the members, and the association's rule compelled all children to attend school, unless other provision was made by the parent for instruction. Every pupil was required to devote a portion of time each day to some branch of industry.

A later rule was added to the by-laws September 28, 1844, as follows: "Resolved, that no member of this association shall ever be permitted to bring onto the domain any spirituous liquors to be drunk as a beverage."

#### V. The Phalanx in Operation, 1844

May 18, 1844, the committee selected to report the names of suitable persons to compose the pioneer company for the phalanx decided on the following: Warren Chase, Lester Rounds, J. Stuart, L. Stillwell, George H. Stebbins, T. V. Newell, H. G. Martin, C. Adkins, W. Dunham, Carlton Lane, Alexander Todd, J. T. Cobb, E. Child, Nathan Hunter, Jacob Beckwith, S. R. Kellogg, John Limbert, B. L. Richards, William Seaman, William E. Holbrook, and Daniel Sanborn. Meanwhile "they had collected teams, and cows, and tools and provisions and tents, and started—nineteen men and one boy, with three horse teams and several ox teams,—overland to the land of promise, by the way of Watertown and the long prairie. They camped and marched and camped, and after six days met at the house

of the nearest settler. \* \* \* \* \* This glad neighbor, Saterlee Clark, pointed them out the trail—which means an Indian pony road, and is very much like a snake's path in the mud. They camped at night where the city of Ripon now stands, on the north bank of the stream, near where the stone mill now stands, and on the morning of May 27—to them ever memorable—they repaired to the valley below, on the beautiful plain surrounded by hills, like an amphitheatre, and one of the most beautiful spots nature has formed in Wisconsin, and then on their own land, pitched their tents, stuck their stakes, dipped their spades, and laid the corner stone of the town of Ceresco, as the Lone One called the place."<sup>1</sup>

The records give the names of eighteen men and one boy, as the members of that pioneer band. E. Child, B. L. Richards, William Seaman, and Daniel Sanborn for some reason did not accompany the party, and Uriah Gould, and a seven year old boy, Joseph S. Tracy, were added. Most of this group were comparatively young, the oldest, William Durham, being but forty-eight.

Those who composed the phalanx in the days of its beginnings do not appear to have belonged, even in part, to the class of the unappreciated, the played out, the idle, and the good-for-nothing generally, who according to Horace Greeley, composed the communities which failed under his eyes. On the contrary, they were persons whose industry and general shrewdness had already been coined into a goodly equipment of live stock, farm materials, implements, money, and other necessities for fitting out the new enterprise. What was better, they had all, as Western pioneers, undergone that training in hard work and privation which fortified them against discontent and home-sickness, the bane of other communistic colonies. They were rather religious than irreligious, and among them were two who had standing as preachers in evangelical denominations, Uriel Farmin, local preacher in the Methodist church; and George H. Stebbins, a Baptist minister.<sup>2</sup> With such material, the social experiment began.

<sup>1</sup>*Life Line of the Lone One.*

<sup>2</sup>Mapes, *History of Ripon*, (Milwaukee, 1873). p. 83 ff.

Monday, May 28, 1844, preparation was made for the building of three frame houses. The first ground was broken, the plowing being done where the cellars were to be dug; and breaking for crops was also commenced that day.<sup>1</sup>

George H. Stebbins, one of the pioneer band, in a letter dated May 27, 1844,<sup>2</sup> describes those early hours, as follows:

After dinner the members all met in the tent and proceeded to a regular organization, Mr. Chase being in the chair and Mr. Rounds secretary. A prayer was offered, expressing thanks for our safe protection and arrival, and invoking the Divine blessing for our future peace and prosperity. The list of resident members was called (nineteen in number), and they divided themselves into two series, viz., agricultural and mechanical, (each appointing a foreman), with a miscellaneous group of laborers, under the supervision of the resident directors. \* \* \* \* \* The stock consists of fifty-four head of cattle, large and small, including eight yoke of oxen and three span of horses. More men are expected during the week, and others are preparing to come this summer. Families will be here as the building can be sufficiently advanced to accommodate them. A few words regarding the domain. There is a stream which, from its clearness, we have dominated Crystal creek;<sup>3</sup> it has sufficient fall and water supplied from springs, for one or two mill seats. It runs over a bed of lime stone, which abounds here and can be had convenient for fences and building. There is a good supply of timber and prairie. Every member is well pleased with the location, and also the arrangement for business. Up to this time no discordant note has sounded in our company. We have begun without a debt, which is a source of great satisfaction to each member.

The first season they broke up and sowed eighty acres of the prairie to wheat. On the morning of the tenth of June, the ground was white with frost, which destroyed most of the corn that had been planted, also the beans and vines. Twenty acres of potatoes, buckwheat, turnips, and other vegetables had previously been put in. Work was begun for a saw mill, which was felt to be an imperative need, and a dam was ordered to be constructed; but it was late in the following winter before these were completed. The stream being then frozen over, they could

<sup>1</sup> Butterfield, *History of Fond du Lac county*.

<sup>2</sup> Published in the *Southport Telegraph*.

<sup>3</sup> This is now known as Silver Creek.

not obtain power to run their mill, and thus they were compelled to go through the first winter without adequate covering for man and beast. The hay was fortunately very abundant, and supplied the place of boards for shelter for the beasts and the beds for the families.<sup>1</sup>

September 11, 1844, the buildings being in such condition as warranted it, the tents were ordered to be mended and returned to their owner at Southport. On the same day a committee was appointed to lay out a direct road from the domain to Fond du Lac, which was the nearest town of importance; but on the 14th, the committee reported that a direct road was impracticable, and recommended that for the present travel be "by the way of the guide board and Mr. Sangs." This route is by the way of Seven Mile creek, near the south line of the town of Lamartine. The marshes and sloughs made this the most available route at that time.

As the building and work progressed, the pioneers sent for their families. June 28, 1844, a considerable number arrived, including Mrs. Stuart and five children, Mrs. Beckwith, James G. Tracy, Mrs. Stillwell and four children, Mrs. Newell and infant daughter, Mrs. Martin and four children, Mrs. Stebbins, C. W. Henderson and wife with two children, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Barnes and two children. These were the first arrivals after the original party, except Ebenezer Childs and William Seaman who came early in June, and were in fact a part of the original band delayed for a few days. July saw the resident force increased by Daniel Hager, Volney C. Mason, Mrs. Carlton Lane and three children, Mrs. Seaman and two children, Mr. and Mrs. Uriel Farmin and three children, Mrs. Isabelle E. Towne and two boys, and Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Strong and child; in August, Mrs. Chase came with two children, and during the same month came Mrs. Rounds and child, Mrs. Dunham and two children, also David B. Dunham, and James Hebden; others followed thereafter, accessions being constantly made during the life of the phalanx.

During these earlier months the records of the organization were still kept at Southport, where the officers were. Authority

<sup>1</sup>*Life Line of the Lone One.*

was, however, given the resident directors to conduct the business during this period. September 3, appears to have been the first meeting of the majority of the directors on the domain, and from that time all of the business was conducted on the domain by a resident board of directors.

The November valuation of the lands shows that the organization was possessed of 1,160 acres of land in sections 20, 21, and 29, some of which were appraised at \$2, and from that up to \$5 an acre, the total valuation being \$3,727.20. The price of board for the period ending December 2, 1844, was established, as follows: All over fifteen years of age, fifty cents per week; all under fifteen and over two, thirty-three cents per week; and all under two years, nothing.

November 15, the board divided all labor done on the domain into three classes: 1st, class of necessity, comprising "digging and stoning wells, all work in water, labor necessarily requiring persons to be exposed to storms, mixing mortar and tending mason." 2d, class of usefulness, comprising "all mechanical and agricultural labor, not comprised in other classes, washing, teaming, milking, taking care of stock, book-keeping, and writing." 3d, class of attractiveness, comprising "cooking, dining room work, ironing, domestic choring, gardening, horticulture, care of fowls and bees, and all necessary business of the board of directors." The ratio of the classes was fixed as follows: The number of hours work done each week by each individual in the class of necessity, was required to be returned by the foreman and multiplied by twenty-four; those performed by each individual in the class of usefulness was to be multiplied by twenty; those in the class of attractiveness, by fifteen. It will be observed that this provision gave no proper classification of the so-called skilled labor in the trades, and that the more undesirable the labor the higher the compensation.

This provision for the division of labor did not go into effect until December. Meanwhile, says Chase in a letter dated September 12, 1844, "We do all our cooking in one kitchen, and all eat at one table. All our labor, excepting a part of the female labor, on which there is a reduction, is for the present deemed in the class of usefulness, and every member works as well as

possible where he or she is most needed, under the general superintendence of the directors. We adhere strictly to our constitution and by-laws, and adopt as fast as possible the system of Fourier. We have organized our groups and series in a simple manner, and thus far everything goes admirably, and much better than we could have expected in our embryo state. We have regular meetings for business and social purposes, by which means we keep in harmony of feeling and concert of action. We have a Sunday school, Bible class, and divine service every Sabbath by different denominations, who occupy the hall (as we have but one) alternately; and all is harmony in that department, although we have many members of different religious societies. They all seem determined to lay aside metaphysical differences, and make a united social effort, founded on the fundamental principles of religion.”<sup>1</sup>

The mail during this time was brought from Fond du Lac once a week by James Stuart, who was paid for this service by twenty-four hours credit, and five shillings a trip. Later a post office was established. Lester Rounds, whom Mr. Chase describes as “one of nature’s—not man’s—noblemen and a true-hearted reformer,” was made the postmaster.

Thus far the organization was merely a voluntary association of individuals, having no legal existence. Chase was well aware of the trouble that might be in store for the association if dissension should arise, unless it should become a legal entity, with full right to contract and to hold property in its own name. Accordingly an attempt was made to get a charter from the territorial legislature at the next session, incorporating the phalanx.

To quote again from Mr. Chase:

When the families (about twenty) were all packed for winter quarters, and the boys hunting fence timber and saw logs on Uncle Sam’s land, then the Lone One started to secure a charter, or act of incorporation for the society. The act had been carefully drawn up by him, and submitted to the members and approved, and he was authorized to secure its passage with as few amendments as possible. With this view he visited several members of the territorial legislature, submitted it to them, and secured the aid of some. \* \* \* He was soon

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<sup>1</sup>Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, (Philadelphia, 1870) p. 414.

in the lobby, closely watching the fate of the bill, which did not excite much opposition in the assembly, but by the aid of his good friend the doctor, from Fond du Lac [Dr. Darling], who was a member in seat, was slowly and properly passed, with but slight amendments. It then went to the Council, where he also had some good friends, especially the one who had the titles to the domain [Mr. Frank]. But here the cormorants attacked it, because they thought it a good subject to make capital on, and down came the *Argus*, which was the paper that watched the interests of itself and party. The Lone One offered replies and defence, and although a politician of the same school and party, the *Argus* dare not admit both sides, and it had decided the bill evil, and only a cheating scheme, and most especially a social heresy. But the Lone One made reply through the daily Democratic sheet of Milwaukee, until the *Argus* was sorry it ever took the subject up; and long after was more sorry still, for it felt the injury it had inflicted on innocent persons. \* \* \* It was a hard conflict for the law, so essential at that time for the security of the settlers. But at last the final vote let it through, and the rejoicing man in the lobby was permitted to follow it to the executive rooms. "It will not compromise my democracy to sign it, will it?" said the smiling Governor Tallmadge, as he pleasantly added his approval to the act, which enabled the Lone One to return to his anxious family and still more anxious friends, who were waiting, in deep suspense, the fate of the charter. He soon reached home, and exceeding joy ran through the crowd as they heard the good news: "Now we are safe, for our property will be in our own hands."<sup>1</sup>

The charter was approved Feb. 6, 1845. On the fourteenth of the same month the directors provided that the stockholders be invited to transfer all of their property to the corporation, each to be credited with the same amount of stock in the new association with the same amount for labor done as was credited on the books of the original association. The trustees were to convey their interests in the property to the corporation, and each share-holder was requested to quit-claim his interest also. February 17, pursuant to the direction of the charter, Warren Chase, Lester Rounds, and Uriel Farmin, as a committee, opened stock books at the house of Mr. Rounds, where stock was taken by all of the resident members. April 7th, the stock books were closed, and a council having been elected to take charge of the affairs of the corporation, the books were handed to its president,

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<sup>1</sup>*Life Line of the Lone One.*

the officers of the old society resigned, the proper deeds of conveyance were executed, and thenceforth the association continued under its new charter. Chase says that the neighbors, who had begun to locate in the vicinity, were greatly alarmed by the association, most of them were sure that it would do harm; for it had great power, and would monopolize. "They wished the cursed thing dead. A few saw no evil in it, but only a power for good. These 'four-year-ites' furnished the material and news for prairie yarns and gossip for all the region round about."

#### VI. The Legislative Charter

The name selected was the same as had been adopted in the original constitution, the Wisconsin Phalanx.

The value of shares of stock was continued at the sum of twenty-five dollars each.

The location was fixed in the town of Ceresco, to which town the business operations were restricted. The corporation was, however, permitted to own timbered and meadow land in any other town. In no case could the association own more than forty acres for each person belonging thereto.

The corporation and the officers were forbidden to contract any debt, or to issue any notes, or scrip, or evidence of debt. If any debts were contracted the officers were to be held personally liable thereon. The books of the corporation were to be open at all times for the inspection of the members as well as the officers of the township, county, or territory; and the stock of each member was made liable to execution for debts of the owner.

The officers were provided for as follows: president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and nine councilmen.

Every male member, twenty-one years of age, was entitled to vote at the annual meetings in December. In this respect the charter departed from the first constitution; but whether in response to the demand of the legislature, or of the constituency of the phalanx itself does not appear.

The council was given large powers: "The council shall arrange and determine all business of the corporation, both industrial and financial, and shall have power to make such rules,



regulations, and by-laws for the government of members as they may deem proper, provided always that said rules, regulations, and by-laws shall in no wise conflict with the provisions of this act, or with the laws of this territory." It will be seen that this virtually made the phalanx a municipal corporation within its territorial limits.

The original constitution had provided for the appraisal each year of all real estate, and any gain, exclusive of improvements, was to be the property of the stock-holders; the charter changed this so that the gain was to be divided by giving one-fourth to stock and three-fourths to labor. The charter made the same rule apply to personal property. These credits to stock and labor might be paid to the ones entitled to them, either in money or stock, *at the option of the council*.

The charter made it obligatory upon the corporation to establish a public school, in which were to be taught all of the branches of science usually taught in the common schools of the territory, such school to be maintained nine months of the year. The expense of the school was charged three-fourths to the labor account, and one-fourth to capital, or stock.

The provision of the original constitution with reference to freedom of religious worship was preserved in the same language, in the charter.

#### VII. The Revised By-Laws

Most of the provisions of the first set of by-laws were retained, but there were some changes, made necessary by the charter and by the experience of the practical operation of the association during its existence of less than a year.

The organization of groups was placed in the hands of the president, each group as before to choose its own foreman. The foreman was no longer permitted "to adjudge the rank according to the skill and productiveness such person may exercise," a provision in the early by-laws which had not been followed in practice; but the rule was fixed that the foreman should credit "each person belonging to his group in hours every night with the relative amount of labor performed, making as near as possible the ordinary labor of a healthy person in that business the

standard." The relative rank of the three classes of industry was continued as before: class of necessity, 24; class of usefulness, 20; and class of attractiveness, 15.

Elaborate by-laws for the hearing of any charges against a member were set out, to the end that a full and fair trial might be had after due notice to all.

A demand having arisen for the privilege of living separate from the common table, it was provided that the corporation should extend to such families as chose to board themselves such credits in provisions as should place them on equal footing with those who boarded at the common table.

Every stock-holder was required to balance his account at the time of the December settlement each year, if anything was found to be due from him, by transferring his stock in sufficient sum to pay such account.

#### VIII. 1845

April 7, the corporation being duly organized and the machinery set up ready to run, the association went on as before. The council organized with standing committees on agriculture; mechanical affairs; domestic affairs; finance; on applications; education; corporation affairs; and rules, regulations, and by-laws.

June 2, it was decided that a stone school house be built, and the walls be carried up eight or nine feet high. Meanwhile, more land was entered; members were admitted from time to time on application; a few were rejected (although no reason is shown); and steps were taken to erect a grist mill.

The annual report of the president, for the year ending December 1, 1845 thus portrays the conditions of the settlement:

In our social and domestic arrangements we have approximated as far toward the plan of Fourier as the difficulties incident to a new organization in an uncultivated country would permit. Owing to our infant condition and wish to live within our means, our public table has not been furnished as elegantly as might be desirable to an epicurean taste. From the somewhat detached nature of our dwellings, and the consequent inconveniences attendant on all dining at one table, permission was given to such families as chose to be furnished with provisions and

cook their own board. But one family has availed itself of the privilege.

In the various departments of physical labor, we have accomplished much more than could be done by the same person in an isolated condition. We have broken up and brought under cultivation three hundred and twenty-five acres of land; have sown four hundred acres to winter wheat; harvested the hundred acres we had on the ground last fall; plowed one hundred and seventy acres for crops the ensuing spring; raised sixty acres of corn, twenty acres of potatoes and thirty of beans, pease, roots, etc.; built five miles of fence; cut four hundred tons of hay; and expended a large amount of labor in teaming, building sheds, taking care of stock, etc.

We have nearly finished the long building commenced last year, (two hundred and eight feet by thirty-two), making comfortable residences for thirty families; built a stone school house twenty by thirty; a dining room eighteen by thirty; finished one of the twenty by thirty dwellings built last year; expended about two hundred days' labor digging a race and foundation for a grist mill thirty by forty, three stories high, and for a shop twenty by twenty-five, one story with stone basements to both, and erected frames for the same; built a wash house sixty by twenty-two, a hen house eleven by thirty, of sun dried brick; an ash house ten by twenty of the same material; kept one man employed in the saw mill, one drawing logs, one in the blacksmith shop, one shoe making, and most of the time two in the kitchen.

The estimated value of the property on hand is \$27,725.22, wholly unencumbered; and we are free from debt, except about \$600 due to members who have advanced cash for the purchase of provisions and land. But to balance this we have over \$1,000 coming to us from members, on stock subscriptions not yet due.

The whole number of hour's labor performed by the members during the year, reduced to the class of usefulness, is 102,760; number expended in cooking, etc., and deducted for the board of members, 21,170; number remaining after deducting for board, 81,590, to which the amount due to labor is divided. In this statement the washing is not taken into account, families having done their own.

Whole number of weeks' board charged members (including children graduated to adults), 4,234. Cost of board per week for each person, forty-four cents for provisions and five hours for labor.

Whole amount of property on hand as per invoice, \$27,725.22. Cost of property and stock issued up to December 1, 1845, \$19,589.18. Increase the past year, being the product of labor, \$8,136.04; one-fourth of which, \$2,034.01, is credited to capital, being twelve per cent per annum on stock, for the average time invested; and three-fourths, or \$6,102.03, to labor, being seven and one-half cents per hour.

These were evidently golden days in Ceresco. "Men and women worked with an electrical zeal born of an enthusiasm for a newly-espoused cause and the holiday novelty of all of the surroundings. Under sound direction their labor was fruitful, and this in turn stimulated to new exertion. Few or no tares sprung up in the social garden."<sup>1</sup>

During the year 1845, settlements were made in many parts of the town and most of the land was entered. The phalanx residents being the first ones to enter the township, had practically the first choice of the lands. In 1845 came Captain David P. Mapes, who entered lands to the east of the present city of Ripon, and built his residence thereon.<sup>2</sup> But Mapes was very desirous of getting the quarter section located almost in the heart of the phalanx territory owned by John S. Horner for a town site, and for a time there was great strife between the phalanx people and Mr. Mapes to obtain it.<sup>3</sup> It was not until 1849 that Mr. Mapes succeeded in arranging with Mr. Horner for its purchase.<sup>4</sup>

#### IX. 1846

March 3, Mr. Chase wrote in his usual enthusiastic vein: "Since our December statement, our course and progress has been undeviatingly toward the goal. We have added forty acres to our land, making 1,633 acres free of incumbrance. We are preparing to raise eight hundred acres of crop the coming season, finish our grist mill, and build some temporary residences, etc. We have admitted but one family since the last of December, although we have had many applications.<sup>5</sup> In this department of our organization, as well as in that of contracting debts, we are profiting by the experience of many associations who preceded or started with us."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mapes, *History of Ripon*, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> On the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 22.

<sup>3</sup> This was the E $\frac{1}{2}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  and W $\frac{1}{2}$  NE $\frac{1}{2}$  of Sec. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Mapes, *Ripon*, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> An inspection of the record shows that there were four accepted during this period and two rejected. One application was still pending at the time of the letter.

<sup>6</sup> Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, p. 421.

Meanwhile, applications being received from those outside of the organization for the privileges of the phalanx school, the council fixed the rate of tuition at three dollars per quarter, and board where required. The school house was appropriated to the use of the phrenological class Thursday evening of each week. The "South Woods"<sup>1</sup> were ordered protected, and no one was to be permitted to cut green timber therein without authority from the officers.

During this year some difficulty arose in the matter of keeping all of the members resident on the domain, and it was found necessary in February to pass the following: "Resolved that any member of the phalanx, who being head of the family shall remove his or her household effects, goods, etc., and family off the domain and commence house-keeping or boarding elsewhere [than] on the domain, shall thereby lose all privileges enjoyed as a member and shall no longer be a member of the corporation, as if a stranger."

In March, Jacob Woodruff was appointed librarian for the phalanx, with instructions to keep the files of all papers of the corporation accessible to the use of the members. We have no list of the periodicals which were taken, but at various times the corporation was subscriber to the *Alphadelphian Tocsin*, *The Harbinger*, *The Southport Telegraph*, *The Phalanx*, *The Tribune*, and *The Plowshare and Pruning Hook*. Most of the members were earnest readers and many of them were subscribers to other periodicals. Thus, by a system of interchange, the people of this society were brought into contact with the thought of the great world outside, and in general intelligence and information were in advance of the average pioneers.

Being in need of an expert millwright to construct and operate the grist mill, the council agreed with Benjamin Wright that he should have 12½ cents per hour, to be paid as the members were paid, either in cash or stock at the option of the council.

June 2, steps were taken for the erection of a blacksmith shop, east of the grist mill. This building was located at the

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<sup>1</sup> Now known as South Woods Park of Ripon.

intersection of West Fond du Lac street with the Berlin road, on the north-east corner.

During the summer Benjamin Sheldon was employed to make a beginning in industrial education for the boys. The resolution requests him "to take care of the school boys and teach them and discipline those who are old enough in labor and swimming and other play when needed and to keep a book in which he records his time spent with the boys and also the amount of labor each boy performs in its relative proportion to men's labor."

Numerous applications were received from those who had no money or property to put into the corporation for the privilege of working on the domain and receiving their pay as members were paid. These were usually accepted, and if the association was not satisfied with the work done, the relation was speedily terminated. One such applicant was John V. Bader, who became the shoemaker of the society.

The annual report for the fiscal year ending December 7, 1846, gives the following as the condition of the phalanx:

We have now one hundred and eighty residents; one hundred and one males, seventy-nine females; fifty-six males, and thirty-seven females over the age of twenty-one years. About eighty have hoarded at the public table during the past year, at a cost of fifty cents per week and two and one-half hours labor, whole cost, sixty-three cents. The others most of the time have had their provisions charged to them, and done their own cooking in their respective families, although their apartments are very inconvenient for that purpose. Most of the families choose this mode of living, more from previous habits of the domestic arrangement and convenience than from economy. We have resident on the domain, thirty-six families and thirty-[five] single persons; fifteen families and thirty single persons board at the public table; twenty-one families board by themselves and the remaining five single persons board with them.

Four families have left during the past year, and one returned that had previously left. One left to commence a new association; one, after a few weeks residence because the children did not like it; and two to seek other business more congenial with their feelings than hard work. The society has increased the past year about twenty, which is not one-fourth of the applicants. [This is not in harmony with the records of applications and refusals.] The want of room has prevented us from admitting more.

There has been 96,297 hours medium class labor performed during

the past year (mostly by males), which owing to the extremely low appraisal of the property and the disadvantage of having a new farm to work on, has paid but five cents per hour, and six per cent. per annum on capital.

The amount of property in joint stock as per valuation, is \$30,609.04; whole amount of liabilities, \$1,095.33. The net product or income for the past year is \$6,341.84, one-fourth of which being credited to capital makes six per cent; and three-fourths to labor makes the five cents per hour. We have as yet no machinery in operation except a saw mill, but have a grist mill nearly ready to commence grinding. Our wheat crop came in very light, which, together with the large amount of labor necessarily expended in building sheds and fences, which are not estimated of any value, makes our dividend much less than it will be when we can construct more permanent works. We have also many unfinished works, which do not afford us either income or convenience.

The society has advanced to members during the past year \$3,293, mostly in provisions and such necessary clothing as could be procured.

The following schedule shows in what the property of the society consists and its valuation:

1713 acres of land at \$3 .....	\$5,139 00
Agricultural improvements .....	3,206 00
Agricultural products .....	4,806 76
Shops, dwellings, and outhouses .....	6,963 61
Mills, mill-race and dams .....	5,112 90
Cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, etc. ....	3,098 45
Farming tools, etc. ....	1,119 36
Mechanical tools, etc. ....	367 26
Other personal property .....	715 70
Amount .....	<u>\$30,609 04</u>

## X. 1847

There had been a disposition on the part of some of the members to overdraw their account, and in order to remedy this the council resolved at its meeting January 13, to limit the amounts advanced to members to four per cent on the stock invested, and four cents an hour for work credited on the books to the member asking the advance.

May 31, S. Bates and A. D. Wright were appointed millers and grinders at the grist mill, and a schedule of prices for grinding was fixed. Mr. Chase says of the grist mill: "This had

to be watched to keep the envious neighbors from burning it; so strong was the prejudice because they would grind their own grain in their own mill, and would not, because they could not, grind for others. The jealousy increased as fast as their prosperity."<sup>1</sup>

Thus far the corporation had been unable to buy back the stock of a member when he wished to leave. It needed all its money to purchase lands and other absolutely essential things for the use of the organization. Although the charter forbade the issuance of any scrip or evidence of debt, yet the council found itself compelled within a few weeks after the charter was granted to disobey the provision and to issue orders on the treasury, payable at some future time with interest, usually at ten or twelve per cent. Ready money had always been a scarce article in the treasury of the corporation, but as time went on it became scarcer. In spite of this fact, Chase wrote under date of June 28 in his optimistic way: "The phalanx will soon be in condition to adopt the policy of purchasing the amount of stock which any member may have invested, whenever he shall wish to leave. As soon as this can be done without embarrassing our business, we shall have surmounted the last obstacle to our onward progress. \* \* \* If no accident befall us we shall declare a cash dividend at our next annual settlement."<sup>2</sup> About this time, E. R. Rounds having withdrawn from the phalanx, the corporation informed him that it could not pay him in cash, but it did finally issue to him two orders on the treasury, maturing some time later at twelve per cent interest.<sup>3</sup> September 13, the council decided that it would adopt the policy so far as possible of paying a member, on his withdrawal, what he put into the association, in exchange for his stock. It was not a promise to pay money for stock, and in practice did not so operate to any large extent, but there were a number who availed themselves of this provision and did receive money during the following year.

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<sup>1</sup>*Life Line of the Lone One.*

<sup>2</sup>Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, p. 426.

<sup>3</sup>Record of the association, April 26, 1841, p. 197.



In July, a writer for the New York *Tribune* reported his observations after a few days' visit to the domain. It was glowing, enthusiastic, and imaginative in the extreme. It was followed by a letter from J. J. Cooke to the same paper, under date of August 28, in which the writer takes issue with the statements made, criticises the water power and climate, and says further: "The probability now is that corn will be almost a total failure." Their present tenevents are "such as few at the east would be contented to live in." "The most unpleasant feelings which I have experienced since I have been here have been caused by the want of neatness around the dwellings, which seems to be inconsistent with the individual character of the members with whom I have become acquainted. This they state to be owing to their struggles for the necessaries of life; but I have freely told them that I considered it inexcusable."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Chase replied in the *Harbinger* of January 8 following, admitting the general character of the defects that had been pointed out, but insisting that it was unfair to judge the experiment at this time by eastern standards.

In August Mr. Chase, continuing his letters to the eastern papers, wrote as follows: "Now is the time for practical attempts; to start with, first, the joint stock property, the large farm or township, the common home, and joint property of all of the members; second, co-operative labor and the equitable distribution of products, the large fields, large pastures, large gardens, large dairies, large fruit orchards, etc., with their mills, mechanic shops, stores, common wash houses, bake houses, baths, libraries, lectures, cabinets, etc.; third, educational organization, including all, both children and adults, and through that the adoption of the serial law, organization of groups and series; at this point labor, without reference to pay, will begin to be attractive; fourth, the Phalansterian order, unitary order. \*

\* \* In most cases years will be required for the adoption of the second of these conditions, and more for the third, and still more for the fourth. \* \* \* We have spent three years,

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<sup>1</sup>Noyes *History of American Socialisms*, p. 428.

and judging from our progress thus far, it will doubtless take us from five to ten more to get far enough in the second to commence the third."<sup>1</sup>

The annual report for the year 1847 shows that the number of residents was 157, in 32 families; four families and two single persons left during the year, whose stock had been purchased. 93,446 hours labor had been performed, and the property was appraised at \$32,564.18, giving a dividend of 7¾ per cent to stock, and 7.3 cents an hour to labor.

#### XI. 1848

The secretary's record ceases late in 1847, or rather the record book is written full, so that the inference is fair that there is somewhere another volume, completing and supplementing the record of all proceedings after the year 1847.

In July, an article in the *Tribune*, signed D. S. said: "I have worked in the various groups side by side with the members, and I have never seen a more persevering, practical, matter of fact body of people in any such movement. Since I came here last fall, I see a great improvement, both externally and internally. Mr. Van Auringe, the energetic herald of national and social reform, did a good work by his lectures here last winter; and the meetings stately held for intellectual and social improvement, have an excellent effect. All now indicates unity and fraternity. The phalanx has erected and enclosed a new unitary dwelling, one hundred feet long, two stories high, with a spacious kitchen, belfry, etc. They have built a lime kiln, and are burning a brick-kiln of one hundred thousand bricks as an experiment and they bid fair to be first rate. All this has been accomplished this spring in addition to their agricultural and horticultural operations. Their water power is small, being supplied from springs, which the drought of the last three seasons has sensibly affected. In adding to their machinery they will have to resort to steam."

During this year the long building was white washed inside and out, and the wood work of nearly all of the house was painted. The school house was white washed and painted, the

<sup>1</sup> Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, p. 433.

windows white, the panels of the wood work a light yellow, carvings around light blue, the seats and desks a light blue.

The annual report for this year, dated December 4, does not show great progress in membership, giving resident members 120, and 29 families. Six families had withdrawn, seven persons had died, mostly children. The association declared a dividend of  $6\frac{1}{4}$  per cent on stock, and  $6\frac{1}{4}$  cents per hour for labor, and scheduled its property at \$33,527.77.

## XII. 1849-50

In the summer and fall of 1849, it became evident that a dissolution and division was inevitable, and plans for bringing this about were finally made. They determined to have it done by their legal advisors without recourse to the courts. At the annual election in December, 1849, the officers were chosen with a view to that particular business. They had already sold much of the personal property and cancelled much of the stock. The highest amount of stock ever issued was about \$33,000 and this was reduced by the sale of personal property up to January 1, 1850, to about \$23,000.

In anticipation of the sale of the real estate, as a number of the members were desirous of taking lots of ground in the valley, and forming a village, Otis H. Capron, official surveyor of Marquette county was employed to make a survey, which was completed in June, 1849.

Having disposed of the personal property, the corporation found itself unable to sell its real estate without the unanimous consent of the stockholders, or by legislative direction. The original charter was in the way of sale. Accordingly, a bill was prepared and presented to the next session of the legislature, and January 29, 1850, an act passed, amending the charter so as "to allow and authorize the council to sell and convey real estate by their official act; also to lay out and have recorded a village plat with streets and squares and public lots."

In April an appraisal was made of all the lands of the phalanx platted and unplatted, and the public sale commenced, making the appraisal the minimum, and leaving any land open to entry, after they had been offered publicly. During the sum-

mer most of the lands were sold, and most of the stock cancelled in this way, under an arrangement by which each stockholder should receive his proportional share of all surplus, or make up any deficiency. Most of the members bought either farming lands or village lots and became permanent inhabitants, thus continuing the society and its influences to a considerable extent. They divided about eight per cent above par on their stock. Inspection of the ledgers of the corporation leads to the conclusion that this eight per cent dividend, was composed of the seven per cent declared in the summer of 1849, after selling the personal property, and a one per cent dividend which was paid when the affairs were finally closed up in 1852.

For some reason, a new survey of the village of Ceresco was made by Capron, April 5, 1850, which is the one referred to in conveyances of lands in Ceresco.<sup>1</sup>

All of the sales of real estate were made in consideration of stock of the corporation surrendered and cancelled. Members who did not desire real estate, or who did not have enough stock to procure anything of value, found a ready market for their shares of stock so that they had no trouble in converting them into cash. For example, William S. Brockway, who was never a member, purchased twelve and one-half shares of stock of Benjamin Simons, and then bid in a tract of land including the bed of the creek and three lots in Ceresco,<sup>2</sup> paying therefor these shares of stock. As an indication of values at that time, William Starr secured the 10 acres including the heart of the South Woods for \$140 in stock. Mrs. Isabella E. Hunter was assigned sixty acres for \$312.50.<sup>3</sup>

The leader in planning and executing the settlement was Warren Chase. Even the preparation of the deeds bears evidences of his workmanship, and the accounts are all kept in his familiar cramped handwriting. Thus he was from the beginning to the

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<sup>1</sup>A mutilated copy of this survey is recorded in the office of the register of deeds, Fond du Lac county, book of plats, 1, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>East half of sec. 20, west half of section 21; lots 6 and 7 in block 1, and lot 5 in block 8. Register of deeds, Fond du Lac. Vol. O, p. 545.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 252.

end the active mind of the association, and had through the entire period of the operations the confidence of its members.

### XIII. Social and Religious Life

There is but little evidence concerning the social and religious life of the association. Of what is now available, much is conflicting, doubtless depending upon the point of view of the various witnesses.

The president in his annual report for 1845, says: "The study and adoption of the principles of association have here led, as they must ever do, all reflecting minds to acknowledge the principles of Christianity, and to seek through those principles, the elevation of man to his true condition: a state of harmony with God and with Nature. The society have religious preaching of some kind almost every Sabbath, but not uniformly of that high order of talent which they are prepared to appreciate. \* \* \* The social intercourse between the members has ever been conducted with a high toned moral feeling, which repudiates the slanderous suspicions of those enemies of the system, who pretend that the constant social intercourse will corrupt the morals of the members. The tendency is directly the reverse."

He further affirmed that the society maintained religious meetings and Sabbath schools, conducted by members of various denominations, "with whom creeds and modes of faith are of minor importance compared with religion."

In June 1848, the charge was made in the *Investigator* that the phalanx was irreligious, to which one of the members replied in these words: "Some of us are and have been Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, etc. Others have never been members of any church, but with very few exceptions very readily admit the authenticity and moral value of the Scriptures. The ten commandments are the sum, substance, and foundation of all true law. Add to this the gospel of love, and you have a code of laws worthy of adoption and practice by any set of men, and upon which associationists must base themselves, or they never can succeed. There are many rules, doctrines, and interpretations of Scriptures among the so-called

orthodox churches, that any man of common sense cannot assent to. Even they cannot agree among themselves. \* \* \* If this difference of faith and opinion is infidelity or irreligious, we to a man are infidels and irreligious; but if faith in the morality and principles of the Bible is the test, I deny the charge. I can scarcely name an individual here that dissents from me. I have been a member of the Methodist Episcopal church for about twenty years, and a Methodist local preacher for over three years, and am now secretary of the association. I therefore should know something about this matter."<sup>1</sup>

After the dissolution of the organization, a member of the corporation wrote: "It was a great reading community; often averaging as much as five or six regular newspapers to a family, and these constantly exchanging with each other. They were not religious but mostly rather sceptical, except a few elderly orthodox persons."<sup>2</sup>

A Methodist itinerant writes of the association:

Soon after their settlement, Reverend William G. Sampson, presiding elder of the Green Bay district, visited the place and held the first religious service of which I can obtain information.<sup>3</sup> Not long after, the minister in charge of the Winnebago Lake mission at Oshkosh visited Ceresco, and formed a class of seven members. The names as far as ascertained were Reverend Uriel Farmin and wife, Mrs. Morris Farmin, Mrs. Beckwith, and George Limbert. The first named was appointed leader. \* \* \* \* \* The people of Ceresco were always gratified to receive attention from the outside world, and their hospitalities were proverbial. And though a few of the men were professed infidels, they always received ministers gladly and treated them with consideration. They were especially gratified to have religious services held among them, and the ringing of the bell would generally ensure a good audience. The dining hall was used as a chapel until a more convenient place was provided in the erection of a large school house. \* \* \* At the close of the services the table was spread for dinner and I was assigned the head of the table, with the president of the association at my right and the vice-president at

<sup>1</sup>This was probably written by Uriel Farmin, one of the original members. Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>3</sup>This is an error, since one of the members, George H. Stebbins, a Baptist minister, held service the first Sunday after the arrival on the domain. Mitchell, *History of Fond du Lac county*.

my left. Both of these gentlemen were decidedly infidel in their views, and have since become somewhat distinguished as champions of unbelief. \* \* \* The president on one occasion took the freedom to say, "Though I am not a believer in Christianity, yet I think there is nothing in the world that can so effectually harmonize the views and blend the sympathies of the community as these religious services."<sup>1</sup>

The Rev. Franklin G. Sherrill, first pastor of the Congregational church of Ripon, wrote to the Home Missionary Society Jan. 16, 1851, shortly after his arrival:

It is more particularly the religious life of Ceresco that I wish to notice. At the settlement of the place members of more than a dozen families belonged to evangelical churches. Hence at first, religious services were held with tolerable regularity upon the Sabbath, a Sunday school was organized and a weekly prayer meeting held. Before long religion began to decline, the prayer meeting and Sunday school were gradually abandoned, the Sabbath services became more and more infrequent and finally almost ceased. Soon the church members, and even the minister who had preached to them were seen in the ball-room and kindred places, and at least all belief in the truth was given up, and in its place were adopted various phases of infidelity. The Bible was and still is rejected and laughed at as an obsolete book by many who in its place embrace the "revelations" of Davis the clairvoyant. At last these infidels as if in derision of religion met to organize a church. The question arose, what shall it be called? One connected with the association and who did not exactly understand the object of the meeting, proposed "The Church of Christ"; but this name was soon dismissed. "No, no," said they, "this name will not suit." They decided in favor of "The Church of Humanity."

This sham church existed about six weeks. A Fourierite Sunday school established at the same time and in which no Bible was to be admitted, died also at the close of the same period.

The Reverend Cutting Marsh, an early Presbyterian divine, says that "Mr. Chase, in speaking to Mr. Lathrop of the progress of the infidel principles at Ceresco, said when they first went there thirty families had prayers morning and evening, but then not one. This conversation took place after the Fourierite establishment had been in operation some three or four years."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Miller, W. G., *Thirty Years in the Itineracy*. (Milwaukee, 1875), p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Journal, May 23-June 17, 1850. Wis. Historical Soc. MSS.

Socially, the members enjoyed themselves to a greater degree than was possible for most pioneers. After the hard day's work was over, (and the evidence all shows that they worked very hard indeed,) "the evenings were divided between business and sociality. Monday night there was a business meeting of the council; Tuesday evening there was a meeting of the Philolathian society, various subjects were discussed and a paper read called the 'Gleaner.' \* \* \* \* \* On Wednesday evening a singing school was held. A dance and social enlivened Thursday evening. There was no meeting Friday evening. Saturday evening was a general meeting for reports from foremen."<sup>1</sup> Captain Mapes records that the phalanx having in their midst a good band of music held frequent cotillion parties, and they had some very fine dancers.<sup>2</sup>

#### XIV. Cause of Dissolution

There has been much speculation as to the cause of the dissolution of the Wisconsin phalanx. Many reasons have been given but it is probable that none of them alone is sufficient to account for the dissolution. Everett Chamberlain says: "Chroniclers have been at a loss to find a cause for the failure of a scheme of association so successful in outward seeming as the Ceresco colony was. *Human nature* was the rock on which this fine ship split, as did all other argosies bearing the banner of Owen or Fourier. In one case—as at Sylvania—it will appear to be adversity; in another—as in Ceresco—prosperity which shatters the timbers of the venturesome craft."<sup>3</sup>

The association was formed with the highest of motives, the members at the commencement having been actuated by the desire to improve society; but as time went on, the love of association as a new social principle was lost to view and the phalanx became a mere business corporation which differed but little in principle from modern co-operative experiments. It is this fact which, more than any other, caused the breaking up of the Wisconsin phalanx. There came a time in its history

<sup>1</sup> Butterfield, *History of Fond du Lac County*.

<sup>2</sup> Mapes, *History of Ripon*, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 95.



when the membership, no longer being bound together by the motives of benevolence, wished to dissolve their connection with the association because they thought they could do better elsewhere. It may be that with human nature constituted as it is, such a period was inevitable in the history of the organization; perhaps, if we may judge from this experiment and others of like character, the desire for dissolution must inevitably arise in every such organization.

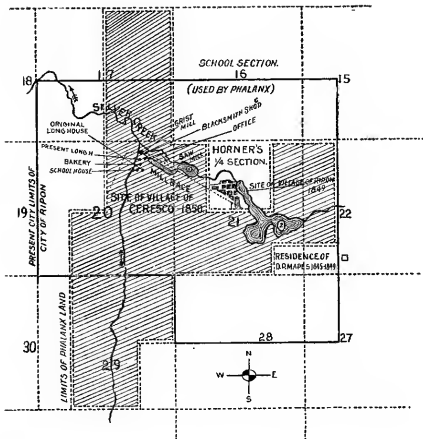
John Humphrey Noyes closes his account of the Wisconsin phalanx, as follows: "Mr. Daniels, a gentleman who saw the whole progress of the Wisconsin phalanx says that the cause of its breaking up was speculation, the love of money and the want of love for association. Their property becoming valuable, they sold it for the purpose of making money out of it."<sup>1</sup> All of the evidence tends to show that this was the true reason for the dissolution.

It may be asked why the members of the association should lose their affection for the social principle which had actuated them at the commencement. Several causes had their influence in bringing this about. In the first place, comparatively few of the original membership actually went upon the domain to work out in practice the theories which they had espoused. As people came into the town of Ceresco, looking for land and a place to settle, the phalanx made every effort to induce settlers to become members, especially when the prospective settler had money in his possession, since the phalanx was very badly in need of money. The consequence was that many members were taken into the organization who were not imbued with any such motive as had actuated the first members. Much of the new membership to start with had no love for association as a sociological principle. To them it was but a business enterprise, also attracting them by virtue of the fact that the social conditions on the domain were so much more desirable than elsewhere on the prairie, and because of their belief that it was a good business policy to invest in the phalanx. Add to this the fact that the membership, which was at first so loyal to the principle

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<sup>1</sup>*History of American Socialisms*, p. 447.

of association on Fourier's plan, gradually fell away and lost zeal for those principles. Consequently it was but a question of time before these loosely bound materials, of which the phalanx was composed, should disintegrate from forces arising from within.



Plan of Phalanx Lands showing location with reference to present City of Ripon and the old plats of Cerescio and Ripon. (1) Cerescio Pond, made by Phalanx. (2) Gothic Mill Pond (belonging to period subsequent to Phalanx).

The written evidence which has been preserved, contains no hint that there was any thought of a dissolution at the time of the annual statement in December, 1848. The first suggestion is found in the following summer. What had arisen in the

meantime to produce a general desire for dissolution? Two facts may account for this, the California gold excitement, and the establishment of the village of Ripon. How far the gold excitement affected the membership at this time, has not been determined; but the establishment of the village on the hill to the east of the phalanx must have had a strong influence on the minds of many of the members. Captain Mapes had secured an agreement with Governor Horner, whereby the former platted the village of Ripon in a portion of the coveted quarter section, upon which he had had his eyes for four years, and was offering inducements for settlers to locate in this new town. Large things were expected of the new village. The spirit of expectancy and of speculation was in the air. Surely there was more money to be made out of building a village and selling the lands than in continuing the operation of a large farm. This spirit of expectancy must have been contagious as is evidenced by the fact that the plat of Ceresco, in June, 1849, was made so soon after the village of Ripon was decided upon, in April, 1849.

Another disintegrating force that operated during the life of the phalanx was the fact that so little cash was allowed the members. The constitution, charter and by-laws permitted dividends on stock and the compensation for labor to be paid in stock or cash at the option of the council. Many of the members put into the concern all of the money that they had and consequently with each annual report they must have become more and more dissatisfied because they had no money given them, either as interest on their investment or as compensation for labor. So far as the record goes, all dividends were paid in stock each year; thus the members were compelled to look to the future for their gains. They were permitted to draw out of the company produce at its actual cost price, which was fixed by the company, but aside from this they had no actual remuneration except in stock during the years of the life of the phalanx. When, in the latter part of 1847, the council adopted the policy of redeeming the stock of any member desiring to withdraw, the privilege was taken advantage of by the holders of about \$2,000 worth of stock, and during the next year quite a number more also availed themselves of this provision. The

consequence was that all of the ready money of the phalanx was used during these years in redeeming stock, and not in enlarging the operations of the association. This had a disheartening effect, of course, upon those members who were compelled to receive their dividends in stock; the only way that a man could get any money out of the corporation was to withdraw. The resolution to redeem stock was made for the purpose of making the members more contented; yet its direct result was to hasten the dissolution and to give members a motive for leaving the association.

It has been asserted that one of the reasons tending to the ultimate division and dissolution of the corporation was that the members grew dissatisfied with the common or unitary life which the association carried out so far as practicable. "In 1845, the question arose as to whether dwellings should be built in unitary blocks adapted to a common boarding house, or in an isolated style, adapted to a single family and single living. It was decided by a small majority to pursue the unitary plan and this policy was persisted in until there was a division of the property. Whether this was the cause of failure or not, it induced many of the best members to leave, and, although it might have been the true policy under other circumstances and for other persons, in this case it was evidently wrong, for the members were not socially developed sufficiently to maintain such close relations."<sup>1</sup>

#### XV. Conclusion

The peculiarities which differentiated the Wisconsin phalanx from other like experiments were these facts: that the originator and organizer retained throughout the experiment the confidence of the members, and attended to all the affairs incident on closing up the business; that on the division of its property, a premium was paid; that no law suit ever occurred during its history. The truth is, it was pecuniarily a success, but socially a failure.

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<sup>1</sup> Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, p. 443.

The following is the epitaph written for it by its leader, Warren Chase:

Born in the spring of 1844, in Southport, Wisconsin; nursed and educated by several teachers, but principally by the Ladies Advocate [Mr. Chase]; married in 1845 by the Territorial Legislature to the Statutes of Wisconsin (the wife died when the territory became a state); certified by Gov. Talmadge; settled and lived in town sixteen, range fourteen, which is named Ceresco, in honor of Ceres, a corn goddess, of which it was a worshipper; grew and flourished, and controlled the town for several years, until it took sick, first of chills and fever, and finally of a severe fever, which weakened its vital powers, until in 1850 it died, quietly and resignedly, having reigned six years triumphantly, and put all enemies under its feet, by its justice and honor. Owned a large farm, which was divided among its children, greatly improving their estates and leaving all but the Lone One better than it found them. Had been a great stock and grain grower, raising in one season as high as ten thousand bushels of wheat. Had one genius who did most of its preaching and law business, and others who attended to the sanitary department. Never used intoxicating drinks, nor allowed them on its farm. Never used profane language, nor allowed it, except by strangers. Never had a law suit, nor legal counsel. Had little sickness, and no religious revivals. Never had a case of licentiousness, nor complaint of immoral conduct. Lived a strictly moral, honest, upright and virtuous life, and yet was hated, despised, abused, slandered, lied about and misrepresented, in all the country about, mostly by preachers. Kept a school of its own all of the time. Took five or six newspapers in each family. Stopped work on Sunday to accommodate the neighbors, and rung its bell for meetings. But they danced without rum, or vulgarisms, or profanity. They had meetings without prayers, and babies without doctors. But it was prematurely born, and tried to live before its proper time and, of course, must die and be born again.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Life Line of the Lone One.*